

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPRN CARICOM, GY
SUBJECT: CARICOM MINISTERIAL IN KINGSTON

REF: A. STATE 181391, B. KINGSTON 6153, C. GEORGETOWN 0177

BEGIN SUMMARY: OFFICIALS CONSULTED HERE HAVE EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT KINGSTON MINISTERIAL CLEARED THE WAY FOR AN IMPROVED DIALOGUE ON CARICOM. MEETINGS OF TRADE AND CENTRAL BANK OFFICIALS ARE PLANNED FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER TO EXAMINE WAYS BY WHICH INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE COULD BE EXPANDED. PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN POSITIVE. GUYANA, WHILE TAKING STEPS TO INCREASE TRADE WITH THE LDCS, WILL PRESS FOR A LIBERALIZATION OF THE CARIBBEAN MONETARY CLEARING FACILITY. END SUMMARY.

1. GUYANESE FOREIGN MINISTER JACKSON, IN A BRIEF COMMENT ON THE CARICOM MEETING AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE BELGRADE NON-ALIGNED MEETING, EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE KINGSTON CARICOM MEETING. THE FACT OF THE MEETING AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL GAVE NEEDED ATTENTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE OR-
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GANIZATION, AND PRODUCED AN IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE POTENTIALLY USEFUL TO A NEW SECRETARY GENERAL, ACCORDING TO JACKSON.

2. DENNIS CORLETTE, COMPTROLLER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE, WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE GUYANESE DELEGATION TO THE KINGSTON MINISTERIAL, CONSIDERS THAT THE MEETING ACCOMPLISHED "AS MUCH AS COULD BE EXPECTED", ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE LONG

DELAY IN CONVENING THE FORUM. HE NOTED THAT AN INFORMAL AGREEMENT ON ACCESS TO SUPPLIES FOR ISLAND INDUSTRIES WAS REACHED WITH THE LDCS WHICH WILL IMPROVE THIS YEAR'S CHANCES FOR RATIFICATION OF THE AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 14 TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW ORIGIN RULES. THIS ACCOMMODATION TAKES THE FORM OF AN "UNDERSTANDING" WHICH RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF LDCS EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS WITH THE PRICE AND QUALITY OF REGIONAL MATERIALS WHICH THEY WOULD BE REQUIRED TO USE UNDER THE NEW RULES TO PRESENT GRIEVANCES TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WHICH IN TURN WOULD EXAMINE SOLUTIONS TO "ALLEVIATE OR REMOVE THE DIFFICULTY".

3. CORLETTE ALSO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT JAMAICA HAD MADE A DEFINITE COMMITMENT TO EXPAND REGIONAL TRADE. HE SAID GUYANA WOULD PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN A WORKING PARTY OF TRADE OFFICIALS MEETING IN LATE AUGUST TO EXPLORE WAYS BY WHICH INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE COULD BE EXPANDED. FURTHER, A WORKING PARTY OF CENTRAL BANK OFFICIALS WOULD EXAMINE PROPOSALS TO LIBERALIZE THE CARIBBEAN MONETARY CLEARING FACILITY TO FINANCE INCREASED TRADE AMONG THE MDCS.

4. OTHER OFFICIALS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAVE EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT GUYANA WAS UNABLE TO FOLLOW JAMAICA'S LEAD IN MAKING A DEFINITE COMMITMENT TO THE LDCS. THEY POINT OUT THAT ARTICLE 28 QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTION WILL REMAIN A SOURCE OF FRICTION, UNLESS GROUND RULES CAN BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKED OUT AT A HEADS OF STATE MEETING. ONE OFFICIALS SAID THAT GUYANA'S BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH EAST BLOC STATES TEND TO UNDERMINE THE INTEGRATION MOVEMENT, PARTICULARLY WHEN COMMODITIES COMPETING WITH LDC PRODUCTS ARE INVOLVED, I.E., EAST GERMAN TOILET SOAP, PRC TEXTILES, ETC.

5. LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE HAS BEEN FAIRLY EXTENSIVE. THE GOVERNMENT OWNED "GUYANA CHRONICLE" RAN A BANNER HEADLINE ON JULY 20 TRUMPETING "COMPLETE SUCCESS AT CARICOM TOP TALKS". ON AUGUST 4, THE "CHRONICLE" REPORTED THAT HARRY DYETT, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CONSULTED CARICOM SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS ON PERSUADING LDCS TO SUBMIT A LIST OF PRODUCTS WHICH THEY WANT TO SELL GUYANA, AS A PRELUDE TO THE AUGUST MEETING OF TRADE OFFICIALS. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, "THE BANK OF GUYANA SEES NO DIFFICULTY IN RELEASING THE RELEVANT FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND THAT THERE IS HOPE THAT INCREASED TRADE WOULD BEGIN BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR WITH THE LDCS." THE ARTICLE ALSO STATED THAT GUYANA WOULD PRESS FOR AN EXPANSION OF THE CLEARING FACILITY, SINCE THE PRESENT SHORT TERM FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS "HAVE NOT BEEN TO GUYANA'S ADVANTAGE".

6. COMMENT: AMONG LOWER LEVEL GOG OFFICIALS, THERE AP-
PEARS TO BE MUCH CONFUSION AS TO THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS
THAT GUYANA CAN DERIVE FROM CARICOM. MANY DENY THERE IS
AN ECONOMIC BASIS FOR REGIONALISM, INSISTING THAT THE
INTEGRATION MOVEMENT IS MOTIVATED SOLELY BY POLITICS AND
CULTURAL TIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, HIGHER LEVEL OFFICIALS,
INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER, CONTINUE TO GIVE STRONG
LIP SERVICE TO REGIONALISM (REF C).
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